

Conversation on Skype and telephone on Monday 2 January 2023, afternoon 2 pm,
Central European Time (CET)
Between Rune Steenberg (in Schleswig, Germany) and Zhanargül Zhumatay (in
Ürümchi, Xinjiang, PRC)

Duration: 17 minutes and 43 seconds

ringing

Zh: Hello

R: Hello, how are you? Are you Zhanargül?

Zh: Hello, who is this?

R: My name is Yusupjan, I'm Serikzhan Bilash's friend.

Zh: OK

R: Do you speak Uyghur?

Zh: I prefer Kazakh

R: I don't speak good Kazakh, I'm Danish, I'm calling you from Europe, from
Germany. I am a researcher. I speak Uyghur, decent Chinese, but not as good as
Uyghur. I understand some Kazakh, but I am not able to speak it.

Zh: OK

R: I have heard your story...

Zh: They said, that because I spoke to him [Serikzhan], the police will come for me,
they will come to arrest me, that is what I was told just now.

R: Yes, so I have heard. Are they coming today?

Zh: Yes, no later than tonight, they told me, we will come for you today, they said,
and arrest you, because, what was it they said, because you have spoken to people
abroad on the phone and told [state] secrets. If you want to save yourself, from
today, from this evening you should go and commit yourself to a psychiatric ward,
and insane asylum. Tell them that you have lost your mind and stay there for some
time. My family here asked me, are you going to do that? Will you go and stay at a
hospital? They recommended I follow this advice, but I said no, I'm not going to go.
Whatever happens I will go with the authorities if they come.
I didn't pass on any state secrets, I don't even work in a place that has such secrets,
I'm not even a Party member.

R: I understand

Zh: I have just been minding my own business, doing my own things, worked and worked well. I have received awards for my work. And someone like me, the police of Ürümchi comes to threaten. They came to my house.

R: Are you at your house now?

Zh: Yes, I am at home now, they told me that they will come arrest me before night today. My relatives plead with me: go stay in the hospital, but I refuse, why should I go, if they want to come arrest me, they can come.

R: Can you give us your address?

Zh: For someone from Xinjiang or someone from abroad?

R: For someone from abroad.

Zh: OK, I live in Ürümchi City, Saybagh District, Angpanggui Road 59 4th quarter, 11th building, 1st Danyuan, 202th apartment.

R: OK

Zh: This is my mother's place. Have you seen my video? Many people of the world may have seen it. Where they pull me out and there is also audio where they say that they will take us away and we scream for help. I have passed this on. So now they call me crazy and say I have lost it. When Serikzhan called me, I told him: no matter what they do to me, if they make me handicapped, if they assault me sexually, if they lock me up or even kill me, I will tell what has happened [to me].

R: Yes, that is good, hopefully it will not go that far. We can write and pass on your story. That will hopefully do some good. I saw your interview with Serikzhan, but since my Kazakh is too bad, I didn't really understand it, do you care to sketch what happened to you in Uyghur now?

Zh: No, sorry, I went to a Chinese school, I studied a bit with Uyghurs so I know some, but I cannot adequately express myself in Uyghur, I have told my story in Kazakh and in Chinese.

Where do you work, did you say?

R: Work for a university, I am a researcher, I have studied the Uyghurs and Xinjiang for more than 10 years, I wrote my PhD on Uyghrus in Kashgar and their marriage traditions. I lived there for 2 years and learnt Uyghru there. I am Danish myself, not Uyghur. And since 2014 several of my friends have also been detained, since 2016 I have no longer been able to go. I haven't received a visa. But I have worked with diaspora people from Xinjiang in Kazakhstan, turkey and elsewhere. That is also how I know Serikzhan. I have written about the situation in Xinjiang in journals and also a bit in newspapers.

Zh: What is your name?

R: My Danish name is Rune Steenberg. In Uyghru they call me Yusupjan.

Zh: OK, let me explain something to you. I am not here to share government secrets or to make the government look bad internationally. My words are heard by the world, but they, here [the Chinese government] also continue to listen. I am just sharing my own suffering and the vileness of the local government of Ürümchi, the bad things that they did. That is all I talked about, that is what I have said. I went to study [in Kazakhstan] and returned and I was not able to save myself from this [camp incarceration]. I have sent you all about my work that I have done here. Now what will happen to me? Are they going to take me away? Will they imprison me? Torture me? You can hear now that I am celarheaded, there is nothing wrong with my reasoning.

R: Yes, I sense that!

Zh: I speak claelry and well.

R: Yes, you do!

Zh: I didn't say anything else. Now we will see what happens, there is nothing I can do to prevent them from doing what they need to do. But if I disappear or if I die, I want the world to hold them responsible. To ask what happened to me, to know that I didn't die a natural death. Many people should know about this, about what has happened to me. The world should know!

R: Of course. We will tell your story, we will pass on what you said. You are right, we need to say and wrtie what has really happened. Not more and not less. We will pass your story on to the world. Hopefully nothing will happen to you, in case you are detained again we will hold them responsible

Zh: PLease write down my family's telephone number. In case they take me away, you will be able to hear it from my relatives.

R: OK

Zh: [to her relatives] give me you number, you phone number, in case I disappear, you can tell him...

[to R] I will give you my mother'S number.

R: OK

Zh: [+86] 182-9080-1773, this is my mother's number, her name is Nurghay Isha. Once they come to take me, my relatives will not be able to go and talk to me. They won't be able to find me. If they take me, I'll be gone. But I will not go to the psychiatric ward! I told the truth, what had really happened. What I experienced myself. Even if they lock me up, rape me, kill me. I have experienced it before, all but death, I have already seen. What is to come, I will see, but the people of the world, the international organisations, the UN Human Rights Commissioner should know, they should come and examine what is happening to me, they should come and help me! They should come and see and if I am killed they should show the world how they killed me. I will never be someone who takes back what I have said out of fear! I

am someone who thinks of the future [before they speak].

R: I understand, I will pass on what you have said to the UN, to western embassies in Beijing and to journalists. If possible, someone will come to check on you.

Zh: OK, if I don't die, if I am not made handicapped, if I don't go crazy, I will be here.

R: If there is anything else you want to say, you can tell me now and I will pass it on.

Zh: Thank you, I have told my story, I have said everything that happened to me, what I have seen, what I know. Those are the things. That is enough, I think. I have sent one video to him [Serikzhan Bilash] that very well demonstrates what I have experienced and seen. The UN and others can get it from his hands, watch and hear it. And then they can come and check where I was taken, what happened to me, if they made me handicapped, if they drove me insane, locked me up or killed me. I don't know what will happen to me.

R: OK, we will do this. Right now, are you healthy?

Zh: I have a heart problem. Once my heart starts beating strongly, I cannot calm it down. I haven't been able to get rid of this.

R: I see, is this something that appeared after you had been to camp?

Zh: Yes, that is something that came after. My heart problems have only started in the last few years. Especially within the last half year.

R: I see. For the rest you are healthy. Also your mind is clear, your reasoning is good, I can hear and sense that and I have recorded it now. I will translate it and pass it on to the UN.

Zh: Thank you. Yes, please pass it on to the UN. Pass it on. I ask for help. I ask for help from the world community, from the UN.

R: OK I will pass it on and hopefully help will come. Also, if you agree, I will call you again tomorrow. If you are at home tomorrow, we will talk, if not I will talk to your mother.

Zh: OK, if I'm at home [we will talk tomorrow]. If possible, someone should come to our house to check on me. I will be here. If I'm not here, it is because they have taken me away. Then the UN can go and check which prison they have taken me to. Let them come looking for me, let them come help me, please!
I'm at my mother's, you have her number. Originally I did not want to trouble her or trouble anybody, my mother is 70 years of age, but if they take me away, this is how you can find me.

R: I see, if someone can come to Ürümchi to look for you. How do they get in? Can they access the building?

Zh: I'm not sure. My mother says that should call her when they get to the address.

R: OK, thank you! I wish you all the best of luck! We'll stay in touch. Goodbye.

Zh: OK, bye!